

mainstreaming **sustainable** regeneration

a call to action



Sustainable
Development Commission

How sustainable development works in practice

Sustainable development is both a **journey** (towards the end point where humankind has learned to live sustainably on this planet), and a **framework** within which a balance can be achieved between potential economic, environmental and social benefits, between the wealthy and the poor (both in this country and between rich and poor nations) and between the interests of this generation and future generations.

For policy makers and decision takers, it establishes a clear hierarchy: protect critical natural capital in all circumstances; wherever possible, seek to optimise economic, social and environmental benefits over time; where that is not possible, seek to minimise any potential damage to the environment, people and their communities; only then can one trade off potential economic benefits against unavoidable social and environmental disbenefits.

mainstreaming sustainable regeneration: a call to action

A report by the UK Sustainable Development Commission

December 2003

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Preface

To Ministers responsible for regeneration policy in the UK:

John Prescott MP, Deputy Prime Minister

Margaret Curran MSP, Minister for Communities, Scottish Executive

Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, Welsh Assembly Government

John Spellar MP, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office

Nearly sixty years of economic growth and development since the Second World War have made life better for many people in ways that would have been unimaginable even a generation ago. We are a much wealthier nation with millions of individuals enjoying a far higher material standard of living.

But conventional economic development of this kind has also brought increasing damage to the physical systems, natural environment and social fabric on which our collective well-being depends. There is no denying the need for further sustainable development in the UK – in terms of new houses and infrastructure, maintaining existing assets, urban regeneration and so on – but we need to deliver that development with far lower social and environmental costs.

As Government Ministers have recognised, the need for a change of direction is urgent. What we need now is a different kind of development, one which meets people's needs today without compromising our future. For this to be sustainable, we must take full account of the social, economic and environmental impacts of our decisions, over the long term. Nowhere is this more important than in the ambitious schemes currently underway to regenerate our communities.

Regeneration is big business in the UK. A large slice of our national wealth is spent on renewing inner city areas and peripheral estates, on restoring the infrastructure that binds us together and on creating vibrant communities. John Prescott has set out much of this thinking in his Sustainable Communities Plan for England, and we are commenting separately on that.

In this report, we build on our 2002 work which we presented at the Urban Summit in November 2002. That offered a vision for sustainable regeneration, one which we found resonated with many people. Since then, we have drawn on the experience of a wide range of policy makers, practitioners and community organisations across the UK. Like us, they believe we need to move beyond the conventional development model, where concern for communities, for social justice and for the physical environment are all too often addressed as an afterthought. We need to integrate social, economic and environmental goals in a new way – to aspire to and achieve genuinely sustainable regeneration. Many are already seeking to do this, but feel isolated and frustrated that it's taking so long to deliver something that is self-evidently so necessary and so sensible.

This report, drawing on these findings but reaching our own conclusions, presents government with a major challenge. It is to move sustainable development from the margins of regeneration activity to the mainstream.

I look forward to an opportunity to discuss this report with you, and working with you and your officials to help implement our recommendations.

Jonathon Porritt

Chairman, Sustainable Development Commission

December, 2003

Policy summary

This report is the culmination of 18 month's investigation by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) into how neighbourhood regeneration can be made more sustainable. By undertaking such an investigation we sought **to identify what makes a regeneration programme sustainable, and what needs to be done to ensure that future regeneration programmes combine positive economic, social and environmental outcomes.**

Using the UK Government's sustainable development objectives and our own principles, we identified three core criteria that we believe are essential for sustainable regeneration:

- **Putting local people at the heart of the process**, engaging them as active and proactive participants, in order to combat social exclusion, strengthen communities and encourage more equitable economic development
- **Improving the quality of the local environment** whilst aiming for positive impacts or minimising negative impacts on resource use and the earth's natural systems
- **Taking an integrated and long-term approach** that recognises that neighbourhood problems have complex interlinked social, economic and environmental causes.

We published our *Vision for sustainable regeneration* at the Urban Summit in November 2002, and since then have undertaken a major consultation with policy makers and practitioners. The findings of this consultation form the main body of our report.

We have concluded that the concept of sustainable regeneration – ensuring simultaneously positive social, economic and environmental outcomes – is recognised and accepted by a large number of individuals and projects. Many practitioners and policy makers connected with regeneration in the UK believe that a sustainable development approach can achieve added value to regeneration. Many local communities and organisations are becoming more sustainable, but their efforts have not yet reached the point where sustainable regeneration could be described as 'mainstream'. To do this they need a stronger lead from government at both national and local level.

The SDC has 10 key action points for government (UK and Devolved) that would help to mainstream sustainable regeneration in practice (see over page).

The Sustainable Development Commission calls upon the Deputy Prime Minister, other Whitehall Ministers and Ministers in the Devolved Administrations to review their regeneration strategies in the light of these recommendations, and to agree and publish action plans by July 2004.

The Sustainable Development Commission also calls upon the Audit Commission, the Auditor General for Wales, Audit Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Audit Office to further their interest in regeneration, housing, community wellbeing and sustainable development by reflecting these conclusions and recommendations in their work.



10
action points

Policy summary:

10 action points to mainstream sustainable regeneration



Sustainable development principles should be at the heart of regeneration policy and practice, thus ensuring that regeneration has environmental as well as economic and social justice outcomes.



Local people should continue to be at the heart of the process. Effective community involvement and development is essential for successful regeneration. This is just as true for sustainable regeneration. Sustainable regeneration helps highlight the need for good community involvement and development, including local businesses and voluntary organisations. The next generation of community leaders should be fostered through training programmes and in schools.



Training strategies for economic development, regeneration and planning should address the lack of understanding of sustainable development, and the shortage of skills needed to deliver sustainable regeneration. Government should ensure that the Regional Centres of Excellence for Urban Regeneration prioritise sustainable development in all of their capacity-building work with professionals, councillors and community leaders.



Improving the quality of the local environment whilst minimising negative impacts of resource use should be part of the strategic aims of every regeneration programme and partnership. Government should require neighbourhood regeneration programmes to undertake a review of the local environment, including the impact of external pollution and other issues of environmental justice.



Government's own environment and resource priorities and targets should be integrated into neighbourhood regeneration programmes, particularly:

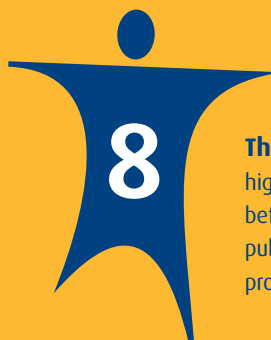
- Climate change and carbon emissions reduction
- Waste management
- Sustainable transport networks
- Water supply and flood management issues
- Green space strategies
- Sustainable construction.



An integrated and long-term approach should be built in to regeneration programmes from the start, including the involvement of environmental agencies in partnerships, environmental assessment and whole life costings. Within government, cross-departmental targets should be set and regularly reviewed jointly as part of the development of plans and policies.



Housing and construction should be regarded as a major opportunity to embed sustainable development in regeneration and in particular to make a significant contribution to carbon emissions reduction. There should be regular reviews of building regulations and construction processes to ensure that both social rented and private developers are required to incorporate full energy efficiency measures, use sustainable energy, reduce waste and pollution, include low toxin materials and promote the responsible use of natural resources.



The planning system should contribute through insistence on higher densities in urban areas, on full environmental assessments before demolition programmes are undertaken, and on integrating public transport into development plans. Planners need to be more proactive in promoting sustainable development.



Employment programmes that are part of regeneration initiatives should support new training programmes in local environmental management, (including recycling, energy conservation and renewables). Neighbourhood management vehicles should be created with a focus on maintenance, security, local services, community links – all of which create front-line jobs.



Existing good practice should be built upon and exchanged, both at a government (e.g. Housing Corporation/Communities Scotland) level and at a neighbourhood level. Good practice in sustainable regeneration should be rewarded and given higher profile, for example through Deputy Prime Minister's Awards for sustainable communities.

Introduction

1. The Sustainable Development Commission is the UK's independent Government advisor on sustainable development, reporting to the Prime Minister and Devolved Administration leaders. Our mission is to inspire government, the economy and society to embrace sustainable development as the central organising principle. Our remit is to advocate sustainable development across all sectors in the UK, review progress and build consensus for action.

2. This report is the culmination of 18 month's investigation by the SDC into how neighbourhood regeneration can be made more sustainable. We have looked at projects throughout the UK, have talked to practitioners, policy makers, and community groups and have listened to their experiences and hopes. By undertaking such an investigation we sought **to identify what makes a regeneration programme sustainable, and what needs to be done to ensure that future regeneration programmes combine positive economic, social and environmental outcomes.**

3. Regeneration is a huge industry in the UK. A large amount of our national budget is spent on renewing inner city areas, on giving new life to council estates, on large scale flagship developments, on renewing the infrastructure that binds us together and creating vibrant communities for our growing and changing population.

4. Sustainable regeneration is vital to the success of the UK, and at the heart of whether we will be able to meet the commitments made to reduce carbon emissions, to adapt to climate change and to protect and enhance our environment, as well as to provide safe, comfortable and healthy communities and economic wellbeing. In other words, regeneration is at the heart of our progress towards sustainable development – creating a society which we can be proud to hand on to our children's children.

5. In undertaking this investigation, we have confined ourselves to one aspect of regeneration – that of renewing local neighbourhoods. We have resisted the temptation to widen this review to consider national strategies like the Sustainable Communities Plan. The SDC will be commenting on the Plan separately. We have tried to learn from across the UK. Following devolution, there are opportunities to consider the different approaches that are being taken in the four parts of the UK, involving different statutory responsibilities and with different funding arrangements.

6. Inevitably, much of what we have to say concerns the biggest investment in regeneration – that of housing. This study is focused on regeneration, housing and the environment at a local neighbourhood level.

7. We began the review by asking the questions: how far do our current approaches to regeneration address not only the social and economic inequalities within society, but also the environmental inequalities? What is the link between quality of the local environment and poverty?

8. We carried out a desk review of existing literature, policy frameworks and initiatives. From that we set out our own vision of sustainable regeneration¹, launched at the Urban Summit in November 2002, and circulated this for comment to policy makers and practitioners across the UK. We interviewed senior policy makers, practitioners and commentators, and collected information from local case studies

9. This led us to the interim conclusion that **many individual projects, mainly small scale and isolated, are striving to achieve sustainable regeneration, but there are difficulties in learning their lessons or mainstreaming them. There is also a desire on the part of policy makers and practitioners for more effective delivery.**

10. We then held a workshop drawing together policy makers and practitioners to discuss two further questions:

- What can/could/should practitioners do to mainstream sustainable development in regeneration?
- What can/could/should government (in Whitehall both for England and for UK level and in the Devolved Administrations) do to mainstream sustainable development in regeneration?

11. This report synthesises the findings from our consultation, and from the workshop. However, the conclusions that are drawn from all of this are ours.

12. In structuring the rest of this report, we first set out the SDC's **approach** to regeneration, and then pull together the **findings** of our investigation. Next we draw our **conclusions** and finally set out a series of **recommendations**; we are wholly responsible for these.

1. SDC (2002) *Vision for sustainable regeneration – environment and poverty: the missing link?*, London: SDC

The Sustainable Development Commission and regeneration

13. We live in a crowded island with significant population movements and changes in household formation creating pressures on land, infrastructure and existing communities on one hand and decline in others. Decline is accompanied by unemployment, social exclusion, environmental dereliction and negative equity. Regeneration seeks to manage and arrest decline; to make areas attractive and to create successful villages, towns, cities and regions. Regeneration is complex and challenging and sometimes fails. There are areas that have experienced serial regeneration initiatives over many years and continue to exhibit severe and unacceptable deprivation.

14. Over the years the UK (in its constituent parts) has developed innumerable regeneration programmes (see Table 1 for Dateline of regeneration initiatives by UK Government 1960s – 2003), from those that provide simple physical solutions to those that recognise that the complex causes of decline and the resultant ‘fall out’ have to involve more sophisticated measures bringing together public, private and community stakeholders to tackle the social and economic issues that are faced in neighbourhoods requiring regeneration. While partnership working has become the norm, different parts of the UK face different problems and have therefore developed different solutions.

Table 1: Dateline of regeneration initiatives by UK Government 1960s – 2003

1960s (late)	Urban Aid
1969	Community Development Programme
1972	Inner Area Studies
1978	Urban Programme
1978	Inner Area Partnerships
1979	Priority Estates
1980	Urban Development Corporations + Enterprise Zones
1983	Welsh Priority Estates Project
1985	Estate Action
1987	Large Scale Voluntary Transfers
1987	Review of Co-operatives
1989	Estate Management Board and Tenant Management Organisations
1991	City Challenge
1993	Estate Renewal Challenge Fund
1994	Single Regeneration Budget
1997	Social Exclusion Unit
1998	Education Action Zones (+ Health Work etc)
1998	New Deal for Communities
1998	Regional Development Agencies (Act 1998 – 1999 first agencies set up)
1998	Sure Start (first trailblazers in 1999)
1999	Urban Task Force, chaired by Lord Rogers
1999	Crime and Disorder Partnerships (1998 Act gives power to set them up)
2000	Urban Regeneration Companies (White Paper recommended setting up 12)
2000	Drug Action Teams
2000	Neighbourhood Renewal Unit established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Renewal Fund • Neighbourhood Management • Neighbourhood Wardens
2000	Thames Gateway Partnership
2001	Urban and Rural White Papers
2001	Arm's Length Management Organisations
2002	Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders
2003	Publication of Sustainable Communities Plan
2003	Urban Development Corporations
2003	Regional Housing Boards

15. The long-term objective of neighbourhood regeneration is the creation of ‘sustainable communities’. Throughout this investigation we have been assessing what we believe makes for a ‘sustainable community’. To do this we have applied the definitions and principles that the SDC applies to all of its work.

Sustainable development – definitions, principles, objectives and goals

16. The UK Government’s sustainable development definition and objectives provide a starting point for our investigation:

At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of **ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for**

generations to come. It means meeting five objectives at the same time:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
- and considering the long-term implications of decisions.

Quality of Life Counts, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1999

17. The SDC has developed a set of six core principles that underlie all our work and help us provide a sustainable development perspective on the overall social, economic and environmental issues facing the UK. We have applied these principles to this investigation of neighbourhood regeneration:

SDC principles for sustainable development

1. Putting sustainable development at the centre

Sustainable development should be the organising principle of all democratic societies, underpinning all other goals, policies and processes. It provides a framework for integrating economic, social and environmental concern over time, not through crude trade-offs, but through the pursuit of mutually reinforcing benefits. It promotes good governance, healthy living, innovation, life-long learning and all forms of economic growth which secure the natural capital upon which we depend. It reinforces social harmony and seeks to secure each individual’s prospects of leading a fulfilling life.

2. Valuing nature

We are and always will be part of nature, embedded in the natural world, and totally dependent for our own economic and social wellbeing on the resources and systems that sustain life on Earth. These systems have limits, which we breach at our peril. All economic activity must be constrained within those limits. We have an inescapable moral responsibility to pass on to future generations a healthy and diverse environment, and critical natural capital unimpaired by economic development. Even as we learn to manage our use of the natural world more efficiently, so we must affirm those individual beliefs and belief systems which revere Nature for its intrinsic value, regardless of its economic and aesthetic value to humankind.

3. Fair shares

Sustainable economic development means ‘fair shares for all’, ensuring that people’s basic needs are properly met across the world, whilst securing constant improvements in the quality of peoples’ lives through efficient, inclusive economies. ‘Efficient’ simply means generating as much economic value as possible from the lowest possible throughput of raw materials and energy. ‘Inclusive’ means securing high levels of paid, high quality employment, with internationally recognised labour rights and fair trade principles vigorously defended, whilst properly acknowledging the value to our wellbeing of unpaid family work, caring, parenting, volunteering and other informal livelihoods. Once basic needs are met, the goal is to achieve the highest quality of life for individuals and communities, within the Earth’s carrying capacity, through transparent, properly-regulated markets which promote both social equity and personal prosperity.

4. Polluter pays

Sustainable development requires that we make explicit the costs of pollution and inefficient resource use, and reflect those in the prices we pay for all products and services, recycling the revenues from higher prices to drive the sustainability revolution that is now so urgently needed, and compensating those whose environments have been damaged. In pursuit of environmental justice, no part of society should be disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution or blight, and all people should have the same right to pure water, clean air, nutritious food and other key attributes of a healthy, life-sustaining environment.

SDC principles for sustainable development (continued)

5. Good governance

There is no one blueprint for delivering Sustainable development. It requires different strategies in different societies. But all strategies will depend on effective, participative systems of governance and institutions, engaging the interest, creativity and energy of all citizens. We must therefore celebrate diversity, practice tolerance and respect. However, good governance is a two-way process. We should all take responsibility for promoting sustainability in our own lives and for engaging with others to secure more sustainable outcomes in society.

6. Adopting a precautionary approach

Scientists, innovators and wealth creators have a crucial part to play in creating genuinely sustainable economic progress. But human ingenuity and technological power is now so great that we are capable of causing serious damage to the environment or to peoples' health through unsustainable development that pays insufficient regard to wider impacts. Society needs to ensure that there is full evaluation of potentially damaging activities so as to avoid or minimise risks. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to the environment or human health, the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason to delay taking cost-effective action to prevent or minimise such damage.

Sustainable Development Commission, 2002

18. We have also recognised the Government's four goals for energy policy in its Energy White Paper:

- to put ourselves on a path to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions – the main contributor to global warming – by some 60% by about 2050, as recommended by the Royal Commission for Environmental Pollution, with real progress by 2020
- to maintain the reliability of energy supplies
- to promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and to improve our productivity
- to ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy, Department for Trade and Industry, 2003

19. Regeneration programmes have the potential to make a major contribution to this, and the proposed energy strategy is an opportunity for regeneration programmes. Included in the section entitled 'A possible scenario for the energy system in 2020', the Government envisages that:

- There will be much more local generation, in part from medium to small/community power plant, fuelled by locally-grown biomass, from locally generated waste, from local wind sources, or possibly from wave and tidal generators. These will feed local distributed networks, which can sell excess capacity into the grid. Plant will increasingly generate heat for local use.
- Energy efficiency improvements will reduce demand overall, despite new demand for electricity for example as homes

move to digital television and as computers further penetrate the domestic market...

- New homes will be designed to need very little energy and will perhaps even achieve zero carbon emissions. The existing building stock will increasingly adopt energy efficiency measures...

Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy, Department for Trade and Industry, 2003

What makes for sustainable regeneration?

20. Taking these into account, we have identified **three core criteria** that we believe are essential for sustainable regeneration:

- **Putting local people at the heart of the process**, engaging them as active and proactive participants, in order to combat social exclusion, to strengthen communities and to encourage more equitable economic development
- **Improving the quality of the local environment** whilst aiming for positive impacts or minimising negative impacts on resource use and the earth's natural systems
- **Taking an integrated and long-term approach** that recognises that neighbourhood problems have complex interlinked social, economic and environmental causes.

21. The chart overleaf illustrates the relationship between these criteria, the SDC's principles, and the UK Government's sustainable development objectives:

Chart illustrating the relationship between the SDC's core criteria and principles and the UK Government's sustainable development objectives

UK Government sustainable development strategy objectives	SDC principles of sustainable development	SDC sustainable regeneration criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone • Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair shares • Good governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting local people at the heart of the process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective protection of the environment • Prudent use of natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing nature • Polluter pays • Adopting a precautionary approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of the local environment whilst minimising resource use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acknowledging the need to meet the four objectives at the same time</i> • <i>Considering the long term implications of decisions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting sustainable development at the centre • Adopting a precautionary approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking an integrated and long-term approach.

22. In using this approach, we need to be able to measure the outcomes of the regeneration process in terms of 'sustainable communities'. **We have therefore developed four key characteristics of a sustainable community:**

- **Community stability, organisation and neighbourhood management** – essential to social support and urban viability, ensuring well maintained, secure conditions which are the prerequisite of stable, long-term, participative and cohesive communities.
- **Reducing negative and increasing positive environmental impacts** – to enhance and protect the environment, and encourage a stewardship approach to the environment by communities. For example: reusing existing buildings; cutting energy and resource use in construction; incorporating green space strategies and recycling and composting systems.
- **Planning, design density and layout** – to influence the

shape of a community, the level of services and the way people interact with each other and their environment. For example: achieving sufficient densities to make public transport and local shops viable; providing green open space within neighbourhoods; designing pedestrian and cycle friendly streets.

- **Viable local economy and services**, including local housing markets that enable people to invest in their homes without the risk of negative equity; transport links to a wider job market; and education and training for new skills. These provide the rationale and underpinning for community development and survival; e.g. loss of manufacturing has made many traditional urban communities unviable and requires a major economic shift and new uses for existing infrastructure if they are to flourish again.

SDC (2003) *Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Development – a review of the Sustainable Communities Plan*²

2. The SDC has submitted this document to the Deputy Prime Minister as part of our response to the Sustainable Communities Plan; it will be published in due course.

Investigation approach and methods

23. We approached our investigation firstly by outlining our own vision and then testing it with a number of policy makers and practitioners. Our investigation involved:

- 66 in-depth interviews with representatives from organisations involved in regeneration in the UK³
- gathering information about 46 case studies that illustrate the type of live projects, initiatives and programmes that are putting sustainable regeneration into practice across the UK⁴
- a workshop event bringing together 40 experts to discuss practical steps for practitioners and government that would help 'mainstream sustainable development in regeneration.'⁵

24. Our initial vision centred on the question: is there a missing link between environment and poverty in the way we approach regeneration in the UK? Our preliminary analysis of regeneration in the UK,⁶ based on a review of existing literature, policy developments and initiatives, was that **the link between the environmental and the social and economic goals of regeneration has been overlooked in recent regeneration policy and practice. We argued that this link must be made to create lasting improvements to the quality of life for communities.**

25. We examined the concept of environmental justice as it might apply in neighbourhood regeneration: not just the neighbourhood environment but the impact of wider environmental issues such as pollution from transport, the impact of landfill sites or the risk of flooding. A term coined in America, 'environmental justice' has generally been confined to the disproportionate impact of pollution on poorer communities. However, the term is now being widened to include less tangible aspects of quality of life including community confidence, cohesion and safety, civic pride, empowerment and environmental awareness.

26. We also argued that local environmental action by itself would not create sustainable community regeneration, unless it clearly delivered social and economic benefits such as local employment, vibrant local communities, cohesion and ownership. Only through an integrated approach could we address the deep-rooted causes of deprivation – unemployment, ill-health, community disorder – of which environmental concerns are partially symptomatic.

27. We began the next phase of our investigation by talking to organisations that had responded to our invitation for consultation, and went on to talk to others that were suggested to us by these organisations or other collaborators, or identified through internet searches. We initially contacted the chief executive of each organisation, who either agreed to be interviewed themselves or passed on our request to another person within the organisation.

28. We asked both practitioners and policy makers to comment on our vision and to suggest:

- examples of regeneration programmes and projects that achieved mutually reinforcing social, economic and environmental benefits
- their critical success factors
- the challenges to mainstreaming sustainable regeneration and how could they be overcome.

29. The organisations we interviewed represented a range of bodies with some responsibility for, or involvement in, regeneration in the UK, including:

- organisations based in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- organisations working at the national, regional and local level
- organisations working in the public, private, voluntary and research sectors
- organisations with a range of roles in regeneration including delivering live projects on the ground, supporting project delivery, research, lobbying, campaigning, providing consultancy services, and policy making.

The spread of organisations interviewed is set out in Table 2 (overleaf)

30. We collected basic information about case study projects from the range of organisations that we came across or were told about during the interviews. We chose case studies that illustrated the application of sustainable development principles in a practical way, by:

- **combining social and environmental justice with economic progress in such a way as to create mutually reinforcing benefits**
- **responding to the specific environmental concerns of local communities and recognising how the physical environment affects social behaviour**
- **working to have positive or at least neutral impacts on resource use and natural systems.**

31. For each of these we collected information on:

- basic facts
- start date
- funding
- reported social, environmental and economic benefits
- key obstacles identified by the project
- key opportunities and solutions highlighted by the project.

32. Following the interviews and collection of case study information, we held a one day workshop, bringing together 40 experienced practitioners and policy makers from the regeneration field. The workshop provided additional case study material and helped us develop our framework for sustainable regeneration.

Table 2: Spread of organisations interviewed

Sector	Type of organisation	Main area of operation			Totals
		National/Devolved	English Regional	Local	
Public	Government Department	3			3
	Government agency	12		2	14
	Government Office (England)		2		2
	Regional Development Agency (England)		2		2
	Local authority			8	8
Sub-total					29
Voluntary	General	14	5	3	22
	Professional body	5			5
Sub-total					27
Research	Research/academic body	6	1		7
Private	Architectural consultancy	3			3
Total					66

33. In presenting the results from these contributions, we have categorised them under the three core criteria we adopted in the previous section:

- **Putting local people at the heart of the process**
- **Improving the quality of the local environment whilst minimising resource use**
- **Taking an integrated and long-term approach.**

We present:

- examples where current practice is applying these criteria
- examples of the added value that a sustainable regeneration approach can bring
- the problems and issues raised in relation to mainstreaming our three sustainable regeneration criteria, and
- examples of success factors from practice where the three criteria have been applied.

34. There is some overlap between the issues raised under these three criteria. For example, the need to strike a good balance between environmental, social and economic goals has been included under the criterion of taking a long-term integrated approach. However, trying to ensure that the benefits of regeneration are spread through the local community could be included under the criterion of putting local people at the heart of the process.

35. The findings are set out in the next sections. Quotations from the respondents are shown in pink.

36. Some of the success factors which have been identified by the practitioners are reasonably mainstreamed in regeneration practice. In response to the question to practitioners, agencies and government departments, 'What are the challenges to mainstreaming sustainable regeneration and how could they be overcome?', we were told not only about how environmental issues could be brought into strategies that currently have social and economic objectives, but also about the general challenges that face regeneration in the UK today. We did not set out to undertake a wide review of neighbourhood regeneration – that has been carried out by others including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Area Regeneration Programme,⁷ and by the Urban Task Force.⁸ However, in looking at sustainable regeneration, we too were given many of the same key messages.

3. For list of organisations interviewed – see Appendix 1, p36

4. For list of case studies – see Appendix 2, p38

5. For list of workshop participants – see Appendix 3, p39

6. SDC (2002) *Vision for sustainable regeneration – environment and poverty: the missing link?*, London: SDC

7. Carley M. et al (2000), *Regeneration in the 21st Century: Policies into Practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press

8. Urban Task Force (1999) *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, London: E & FN Spon

Findings:

What makes for sustainable regeneration and what added value can it give?

37. The information we collected from the organisations, the case studies and the workshop highlights:

- the reality of sustainable regeneration in practice – what people are achieving on the ground
- the advantages and added value of considering environmental, social and economic aspects of work in regeneration together
- the problems facing such attempts, which might prevent the wider take up and practice of more sustainable approaches in regeneration
- examples of success factors for achieving the three sustainable regeneration criteria.

38. Previous research has identified a significant amount of action at the local level that is achieving social, economic and environmental benefits together by taking a joined up approach to local needs.⁹ Table 3 illustrates how regeneration activity in the case studies is putting into practice the three criteria we identified as representing the core elements of sustainable regeneration.

9. For example: Shell Better Britain Campaign (2002) *The Quiet Revolution*, Birmingham: Shell Better Britain Campaign; Church and Elster (2002) *Thinking locally, acting nationally: Lessons for policy from local action on sustainable development*, York: YPS

Table 3: Examples of the ways in which the case studies are putting the three criteria of sustainable regeneration into practice

Sustainable regeneration criteria	Examples of current sustainable regeneration practice from the 46 case studies
Putting local people at the heart of the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-build • Home Zones (pedestrian priority streets) • Health Impact Assessments • Training and education • Community enterprises • Industrial Provident Society formation • Partnerships/co-operatives – local authorities and other organisations • Community consultations/listening forums/Enquiry by Design/Planning for Real exercises/street parties • Residents' and tenants' associations/steering groups/local alliances • Development Trusts • Community centres/support groups established/facilities • Areas of regeneration taken into community control • Local volunteers • Ongoing local management • Neighbourhood wardens • Social inclusion strategies • Drug and alcohol awareness programmes • Fuel poverty projects
Improving the local environment whilst minimising resource use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological housing (energy efficiency, sustainable design & construction) • Small-scale renewable energy projects/energy crops • Community forests • Organic gardening/city farms • Large-scale physical regeneration of derelict land • Eco-Management and Audit Scheme implementation (EMAS) • Green business parks • In-house environmental training • Recycling projects/composting • Community gardening services • Ecological improvements • Better public transport • Locally sourced food • Sustainable urban drainage systems • Open space creation and wildlife habitat creation • Local labour • Local sourcing of materials

Table 3: (Continued) Examples of the ways in which the case studies are putting the three criteria of sustainable regeneration into practice

Sustainable regeneration criteria	Examples of current sustainable regeneration practice from the 46 case studies
Taking an integrated and long term approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green tourism • Housing refurbishment • Building renovation • Education schemes/raising awareness – schools, organisations, residents • Credit unions • Demonstration projects, sharing good practice • Connecting old and new communities • Maintenance charters • Healthy eating programmes • Employment agencies • High density housing (new developments)

39. We asked 17 of the interviewees about the added value that a sustainable regeneration approach can help bring to a regeneration project. They identified 32 examples of significant

added value linked to sustainable regeneration practice. Table 4 presents the linked added value that the interviewees cited, presented under the three sustainable regeneration criteria.

Table 4: Added value from a sustainable regeneration approach

Sustainable regeneration action	Linked added value		
Putting local people at the heart of the process	Economic	Social	Environmental
Involving/consulting the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quicker and more successful regeneration projects • Less unemployment • New community enterprises • More likely for project to become self-sufficient in the long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater participation and communication with the community • Contributes to social inclusion • Personal development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved local environment • Environmental education opportunities
Enabling/empowering the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lower burden on government (if community enabled to take responsibility for their neighbourhood) 		
Training local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved employment opportunities and more employment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced travelling distances
Improving the local environment whilst minimising resource use			
Taking a resource efficient approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can save money (for community, individuals and developers) • Provides marketing opportunity for an area • New employment • Long-term savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health • Improves the image of an area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term durability • Reduced negative environmental impacts • Resource savings

Table 4: (continued) Added value from a sustainable regeneration approach

Sustainable regeneration action	Linked added value		
Improving the local environment whilst minimising resource use	Economic	Social	Environmental
Improving the local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reduce number of NHS patients • Attracts employers into an area • Increased prosperity for an area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health • Lifts pride of the community • Image of area improved • Improved safety and crime reduction • Improved quality of life and area more pleasant • Educational opportunities and new projects stimulated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved air quality • More wildlife and biodiversity
Valuing nature		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and entertainment uses • Leisure and fitness opportunities 	
Environmental education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages participation (e.g. parents involved) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved local environment
Training in environmental skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New workforce • More employment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental improvements
Taking an integrated and long-term approach			
Long-term approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term savings • Area can reach point where it needs less public intervention 		
Working together in an integrated way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and budgets used more effectively 		

Findings: core criterion 1

Putting local people at the heart of the process

40. Meaningful community involvement was perceived by respondents as the foundation of all sustainable regeneration projects and programmes, helping ensure local appropriateness, local ownership and support, and maximising benefits for local people. Despite years of developing techniques, this is still one of the most difficult areas of public policy. The language of regeneration and sustainable development can be ‘alienating, and language used by professionals on committees and in master plans can be incomprehensible and intimidating.’

Challenges faced

41. We gathered 40 points from interviews, workshop participants and case study visits about putting local people at the heart of the process. 36 were issues of community development, the rest were on planning. They are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of main problem areas/issues relating to the criterion:
Putting local people at the heart of the process

Problem area/issue		Example comment/point raised	Number of times raised
Community development issues	Achieving representation	• Need to ensure representation from across the community	1
	True participation at all stages	• Full participation in decision making and delivery, not tokenism	3
	Taking communities seriously	• Big funding bodies can fail to recognise that local people can achieve things independently	3
	Need for support	• No network for community workers • People living on low incomes need support to help them make a meaningful input, attend meetings and training sessions	8
	Timescale	• Time is an essential ingredient for sufficient consultation, dialogue, trust and capacity building • Community partnerships and action plans take time to form	3
	Power	• Small organisations face lots of barriers and struggle where big organisations succeed • Ownership/management of assets/resources	6
	Capacity	• Need for more enterprise and community leadership skills and experience to help regeneration projects become self-supporting	5
	Maintaining over time	• Problem of loss of key people	7
Sub-total			36
Planning system issues		• The community has a very small window [of opportunity] through which to object [to planning applications], plus they are not able to appeal • Lack of skills and resources within planning departments to encourage greater community involvement	4
Sub-total			4
Total			40

Achieving representation

42. Ensuring representation from across the community is a major challenge, and particular effort needs to be invested in engaging marginalised groups such as minority ethnic populations, young and elderly people.

Need for support

43. Resources and expertise in the field are major constraints; people are unaware of the availability of suitable training.

‘There is inadequate training to achieve capacity building.’

Local people on low incomes need to be supported if they are expected to make a meaningful input, e.g. attending meetings and training sessions. Insufficient funding is provided for community consultation, capacity building and engagement.

Timescale

44. Allowing time for capacity building. **‘Time is an essential ingredient for sufficient consultation, dialogue, trust and capacity building.’** It is not always built into programmes or is restricted by funding rules. Achieving the right balance between the local authority and other agencies’ input into regeneration and the community takes time and is not always successful.

Power

45. There is an inequality of power between the community and other bodies involved in regeneration. **‘Though consultations take place, the professional power of large organisations can be debilitating, for example planners and developers produce plans before consulting with the community.’** Political processes can present barriers to communities participating fully in decision making and delivery.

Capacity

46. Creating community ownership through capacity building. Ownership and management of assets/resources can be empowering, but it is often assumed that communities have the capacity to manage the resources they are given effectively, whereas this needs to be built. **‘Community groups are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their desire to ‘do it for themselves’, but again this requires a lot of support on the part of practitioners in terms of capacity building.’** Some communities have declined to the point of being severely dysfunctional and the commitment to change and effective leadership may be absent.

Maintaining community involvement over time

47. Community involvement can be dependent on a handful of key individuals. **‘When these people leave the community it can have a big impact on the momentum of interest from the rest of the community. Not enough time is spent on fostering the next generation of community leaders through training programmes and schools.’**

Planning

48. The points raised about the planning system can be summarised as:

- the failure of the planning system to engage the community effectively, and concern that planning departments generally do not have the skills and resources to encourage greater community involvement
- the inherent disadvantage of small, poorly resourced organisations and the community in the planning system. For example, the small window of opportunity for commenting and the lack of right to appeal given to the community in the planning system.

Success factors

49. We asked those we talked to about success factors from projects that were implementing sustainable regeneration principles in practice. The success factors mentioned in connection with putting local people at the heart of the process included:

- Implementing inclusive community engagement strategies which encourage strong community leadership in defining project goals, ensure community ownership of the means of achieving them and promote community cohesion
- Making links with schools to develop education programmes on the regeneration of their neighbourhood. Children will be key activists in the future
- Creating local employment, training and community re-investment opportunities through local procurement (e.g. using local labour in housing refurbishment/sustainable construction) and local environmental action (e.g. community enterprises in recycling, renewables, food production, or street/park wardens)
- Using practical environmental projects as a focus for strengthening community cohesion, boosting civic pride and furthering the capacity of communities to help themselves
- Using large-scale environmental improvements to stimulate community involvement and economic growth. They create attractive environments for business or act as a catalyst for tourism and leisure strategies by undertaking environmental works, for example by cleaning up waterways and brownfield land.



Case study: Fairfield, Perth

In 1981, Hunter Crescent, as it was known then, suffered the highest level of multiple deprivation in Scotland. There was a lack of belief that the area could be turned around, from those outside the area who perceived a criminalised population and those within the estate who believed that there was a lack of political and financial will to improve matters. In 1984 the Scottish Development Agency asked Gaia Architects to run a series of community consultations and assess the consensus for regeneration and the way forward. This exercise led to a radical action plan to be implemented by a new residents-run housing co-operative.

A long-term phase by phase approach has been taken over the last 19 years, resulting in mutually reinforcing social, environmental and economic benefits. The whole design and specification of each project phase has been geared to a green agenda. Housing was renovated rather than demolished, using healthy and energy-efficient building materials. As a result there has been a reduction in fuel poverty and respiratory related illnesses and an increase in employment levels. This has been matched with a reduction in crime and the stigma of the estate has been lost making it a desirable place to live.

The key ingredients of this transformation are time and community involvement. This combination created work opportunities and training for residents during the construction period with ongoing management being led by the Fairfield Housing Co-operative. Today the latest phase of the project has been completed. Tollhouse Gardens was developed to strict low-allergy specifications. The estate now enjoys worldwide recognition and has recently been short listed for a 'World Habitat Award'.



Case study: Community Environment Programme, East Manchester

The Community Environment Programme (CEP) is a programme of regeneration delivered by Groundwork in partnership with Manchester City Council and a wide range of local organisations and regeneration agencies. It began in East Manchester in 1997, where neighbourhoods have been in steady decline as a result of the collapse of the traditional industrial base, and suffer from long-term unemployment and low housing demand.

A detailed consultation process with residents highlighted a lack of public open space and other perceived problems; also the need to strengthen the links between groups of residents and to tackle issues such as low skill levels and a lack of training opportunities. Since then thousands of residents, community groups and schools have been involved in almost 50 community projects which are already demonstrating significant positive impacts. Rather than simply offering one-off cosmetic treatments, the CEP ensures that improvements to the area will be maintained by developing the skills and capacity of people to continue the process of change.

Real community involvement has taken place in project design and management, with the support of dedicated community link officers. Local people have learnt new skills, leading to greater self-confidence. Abandoned and derelict areas of land have been brought back into productive use. Housing improvements have also been delivered, with advice offered on energy efficiency. The area is now more attractive for business investment.

A particular feature of the programme is the transformation of alleys at the backs of terraced houses. This and other projects have helped reduce nuisance behaviour and 90% of residents feel safer and more secure. Beneficial effects include people opting to stay in East Manchester rather than move away.

In 2002, the programme was awarded a British Urban Regeneration Association Award. According to the BURA panel, the main lesson from the programme is that enabling fractured and damaged communities to be self-sufficient requires revenue streams that fund community workers to work with local people over a number of years.

Findings: core criterion 2

Improving the quality of the local environment whilst minimising resource use

50. Our 2002 vision paper suggested that the link between the environmental and the social and economic goals of regeneration has been overlooked in recent regeneration policy and practice. We asked how far this was the case, and looked for examples where the quality of the local environment had been brought into social and economic regeneration programmes – in terms of the local built environment (including taking account of climate change and other natural resources) and in wider environmental justice issues – e.g. impact of pollution, of noise and of unhealthy food.

Challenges faced

51. The interviewees, case studies and workshop participants raised 45 points relating to the challenge of improving the local environment whilst minimising negative impacts on resource use and the earth's natural systems in sustainable regeneration. Table 6 summarises the points raised.

53. A significant proportion (at least 36) of these points related directly to buildings and construction, reflecting the fact that this area has such a significant impact on resource use. For example, buildings use 50% of our energy and 50% of landfill waste comes from the construction industry. Whether buildings are refurbished and recycled or demolished and rebuilt has significant implications for resource use impacts. In looking at the built environment, many respondents identified buildings and construction (especially housing) as a major challenge for sustainable regeneration. Housing was also seen as a major opportunity to make a significant contribution to carbon emission reduction and waste minimisation. However, it was recognised that there is a wide variety of views as to what constitutes sustainable housing, even within the social rented sector that has led the way, encouraged by Communities Scotland and the Housing Corporation.

Table 6: Summary of main problem areas/issues relating to the criterion:
Improving the local environment quality whilst minimising resource use

Problem area / issue		Example	Number of times raised
Attitudes, perception, knowledge and support in relation to environmental impact and local environmental improvements	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative reaction to unconventional plans • Lack of occupiers' regard to issues such as recycling, car use, heating etc could make negligible any environmental design features • Lack of client demand for sustainable buildings 	9
	Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived greater cost of sustainable projects • Perceived lack of demand for sustainable housing 	6
	Insurance companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance companies raise premiums on developments they know little about 	2
	Across the board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to realise that 'the environment' is as large an employer in the West Midlands as manufacturing • Lack of understanding that resources spent on environmental gains will have positive impact on economy and society • Staff awareness on environmental issues 	4
Sub-total			21
Practical problems in taking a resource efficient and environment friendly approach	Planning system issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for large developers to get through the planning system • Planning barriers for small-scale sustainable programmes are greater • When considering planning applications for eco-buildings, planners place too much emphasis on aesthetic and heritage aspects and do not give sufficient weight to environmental benefits 	7
	Barriers to sharing good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sharing good practice results in costs of environmental improvements remaining high • Lack of knowledge transfer between clients, contractors and sub-contractors due to short-term nature of contracts 	5

Table 6: (Continued) Summary of main problem areas/issues relating to the criterion: **Improving the local environment quality whilst minimising resource use**

Problem area /issue		Example	Number of times raised
Practical problems in taking a resource efficient and environment friendly approach	Industry organisation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of joined-up industry means that it is easy for projects to fail financially, e.g. most 'green' materials are imported • Unavailability of materials in this country 	2
	Shortage of skills/expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be greater support for developing new training programmes in sustainable construction/refurbishment and environmental technologies, e.g. renewable energy 	1
Sub-total			15
Need to scale up/make mainstream more environment friendly and resource efficient approaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable housing projects are often small scale; a critical mass is needed to achieve economies of scale • Too many one-off gimmicky projects 	6
Policy issues for a more resource efficient and environment friendly approach	Need for leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government needs to provide clear leadership on building regulations 	1
	Perverse subsidies/incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perverse subsidies/incentives discourage developers from going further 	1
	Legislative and regulatory barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to remove legislative and regulatory barriers, for example specification for road material is very high and often does not allow the use of recycled materials 	1
Sub-total			3
Total			45

Attitudes, perceptions, knowledge and support for more resource and natural environment friendly approaches

53. The largest number of points raised in relation to barriers to mainstreaming an approach which improves local environment quality whilst minimising resource use related to a 'need to realise that 'the environment' is as large an employer in the West Midlands as manufacturing' or a 'lack of understanding that resources spent on environmental gains will have a positive impact on economy and society'. There are structural problems as well: 'The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund does not have environmental improvement as a floor target – the environment is not seen as central part of the regeneration process.'

54. There is a perception that sustainable housing costs extra – and indeed some of the current experiments such as photovoltaics do have long pay back periods. This perception is

heightened by looking at capital costs only, and not whole life costs. For the construction industry, higher up front costs to build sustainably are a challenge when faced with clients who do not take a longer term view. This particularly applies to the owner-occupied market, where the perception is that buyers do not take into account running costs or environmental factors when choosing a home. 'Developers and contractors are not responsible for longer-term management of buildings, therefore life cycle costs are not considered.'

55. The role of the consumer is critical. 'There is the problem of market demand and consumer taste (especially creating mixed urban communities). A Cambridge study shows the most popular housing type is a bungalow'¹⁰ 'Poor management and lack of occupiers' regard to issues such as recycling, car use, heating etc could make negligible any environmental design features.'

10. SDC comment: But a Mori Poll in the Sunday Times Property Supplement August 2002 indicated that young people and childless couples like apartments if secure and of high quality design; and the favourite option for others is renovated terraced housing.



Case study: The Dyfi Valley community based renewable energy schemes

In recent years the serious decline in farm incomes has hit many family hill farmers in the Dyfi Valley in Mid Wales. Young people have moved away leading to a change in the community's composition. This has led to several organisations coming together with the mission to foster sustainable community regeneration in the Dyfi valley.

The Dyfi Eco Valley Partnership is a locally-controlled company limited by guarantee and largely publicly funded. In its initial phase (1998-2001), the board's constitution included representatives of four local organisations, four regional organisations, four local individuals and the provision for three employees. Since 2002, the board has consisted entirely of elected local people. From the beginning, one of the main emphases of the partnership has been on the area's energy resource to enable local people to carry out small-scale schemes using various renewable energy technologies.

Funding from the EU was secured which, for a period, enabled the partnership to provide grant aid for eligible schemes. To be entitled for this aid, schemes had to be 'community-based' according to the project's criteria. The grant covered 30% of capital costs and a project officer was provided to help initiate ideas and support the community schemes at no cost.

Since 1998, 16 renewable energy schemes have been set up. The largest of these is the installation of a hydro-electric scheme by a hill farm generating electricity for sale to the National Grid. Another is a wind turbine collectively owned by the community through the creation of Bro Dyfi Community Renewables Ltd. The generated electricity is sold to The Centre for Alternative Technology, with some dividends used to reduce energy consumed in the area.



Case study: Southmead Trymside Environment Project

In 2000, the residents of Southmead in Bristol demonstrated their concerns about the pollution in the nearby River Trym. As a result a project steering group was set up and a 'consultation festival' held where local people highlighted their wishes for improved open space and better management of the spaces and local gardens.

A project worker was recruited and a base established locally in Southmead. The project, which is an initiative of Future West (a local sustainable development organisation), involves community development work, environmental improvement of local open spaces and a community gardening service. Activities in 2001 included street and river clean-ups, path resurfacing, bulb planting by local school children, new fencing and seating and community tree planting. Further consultations have generated new ideas to continue the development in the area such as creating a bridge over the river, a pond and wildlife area and new litter bins.

The project is also working with primary schools on a range of sustainable development issues. It is hoped that local work placements will be offered to individuals through the New Deal Environment Option and Pathways to Work.

This project is an example of how all parts of the community can be brought together in different elements of one project to co-ordinate different services to improve the area and meet local people's aspirations. It also illustrates how environmental issues can be integrated into regeneration and renewal schemes, such as Neighbourhood Renewal, which provides financial support for the community gardening service.

Practical problems in taking a resource-efficient and environment-friendly approach

56. A significant number of points raised related to practical problems in improving the local environment quality whilst minimising resource use. These included:

- Barriers in the planning system. Some interviewees were concerned that planners think too narrowly and are too legally and economically driven, and that the system suffers from narrow risk-averse thinking. They believe that the system is 'biased towards larger developers who have the resources to jump through the right development hoops'. 'The community has a very small window through which to object, and it is hard for communities to appeal, whereas developers have the right to appeal.' 'Small organisations face lots of barriers and struggle where big organisations succeed, e.g. planning obstructions, which are very resource intensive to overcome.' Getting planning permission for 'unconventional' aspects of sustainable projects (e.g. local wind turbine or a biomass energy plant) proved to be difficult in some cases. 'When considering planning applications for eco-buildings, planners place too much emphasis on aesthetic and heritage aspects and do not give sufficient weight to environmental benefits e.g. energy efficiency, while many councillors on planning committees do not understand the concept of sustainable development.'
- Barriers relating to sharing good practice. We were told that the failure to share good practice results in costs for environmental improvements remaining high. Reasons for lack of sharing included the wish to retain a competitive advantage and the short-term nature of contracts which limits knowledge transfer
- Industry organisation issues. The main point here related to the lack of development of the industry in catering for environmentally friendly projects, with many materials being unavailable in the UK. For example, 'Lack of joined-up industry means that it is easy for projects to fail financially, e.g. most green materials are imported.'
- Resources for more sustainable projects. These are dealt with in the next section.

The need to scale up and mainstream environmentally sustainable approaches

57. Six points were made which addressed the need to move beyond one-off, experimental projects and access the mainstream, and to scale up, or develop a critical mass of projects, in order to achieve economies of scale. For example, much of 'sustainable housing' in the UK is in the form of 'one-

off', experimental projects. Even within organisations that have carried out some sustainable development (e.g. housing associations), the lessons have not been taken forward into their standard design briefs. The lack of critical mass of demand for sustainable housing has an impact on the way the industry delivers. For example, 'Architects place too much emphasis on design and not enough on energy efficiency'.

Policy Issues

58. Three points relating to policy issues had direct relevance to improving the local environment while minimising negative resource use and natural environment impacts. These were the need for clear leadership on building regulations, the issue of perverse subsidies, and legislative or regulatory barriers. For example, there is a 'need to remove legislative and regulatory barriers e.g. specification for road material is very high and often does not allow the use of recycled materials'.

Success factors

59. Where successful projects have improved the quality of the local environment and minimised resource use we were told that they have, for example:

- Created links between environmental and social justice issues
- Recognised how the physical environment affects social behaviour
- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour by tackling environmental problems
- Created opportunities for sustainable and healthier food sourcing, e.g. through urban agriculture
- Recognised the functional benefits of green space for air quality, sustainable drainage, wildlife habitats, health and recreation
- Developed accessible, attractive and safe green space
- Created attractive places of local distinction through good quality design and by valuing the role of built and natural heritage through sensitive rehabilitation and conservation
- Put in place sustainable transport infrastructure, including cycling and walking networks connected to green space and green corridors and access to public transport
- Created places where precedence was given to people rather than cars (e.g. Home Zones)
- Adopted building design and construction practices that encouraged the prudent use of resources, and used materials and components that are locally sourced, health friendly (e.g. low toxins) and low in embodied energy.

Findings: core criterion 3

Taking an integrated and long-term approach

60. The largest number of comments we received about problems and issues for mainstreaming sustainable regeneration – 89 – related to the criterion of taking a long-term joined up

approach to complex interlinked social, economic and environmental causes of neighbourhood problems. Table 7 summarises these comments.

Challenges faced

Table 7: Summary of main problem areas/issues relating to the criterion: **taking an integrated and long-term approach**

Problem area/issue		Example	Number of times raised
Policy issues around sustainable development	Organisational issues around joining up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government's sustainable development strategy is not embedded in delivery organisations e.g. DTI or Regional Development Agencies Local government processes need to be integrated and simplified. Generally it is difficult to align regeneration projects with other plans and strategies Defra should not have sole charge for championing sustainable development; it should be interdepartmental 	10
	Issues around joining policies up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDAs are still 'silo thinking', not making the links to the environment and society The government is not making connections between forestry and wider regeneration policy, e.g. in spending reviews 	7
	Consistency and clarity of policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many initiatives Government policy keeps changing 	3
	Short-term political cycles and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political impatience – drive for quick results to prove policies are working Political cycle of 3-5 years causes commitment problems 	5
Sub-total			25
Balance of environmental, social and economic priorities	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for jobs in the region means that other aspects of sustainable development are overlooked The debate on costs [in the construction industry] has overshadowed the debate on sustainability 	11
	Ensuring community does not lose out, and benefits are spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration initiatives can fail if they go too far and gentrification occurs. Housing may become too expensive for local people/original residents Projects successful in achieving environmental sustainability have performed less well on social sustainability issues 	7
	Environment left out/lower priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yorkshire Forward came up against resistance from DTI over using greenhouse gas emissions as a measure of the region's success Architects place too much emphasis on design and not enough on energy efficiency 	8
Sub-total			26

Table 7: (Continued) Summary of main problem areas/issues relating to the criterion: **taking an integrated and long term approach**

Problem area/issue		Example	Number of times raised
Resources for a more joined-up sustainable approach	Short-termism	• Funding programmes encourage short-termism	4
	Resources for joined-up holistic projects	• Holistic projects face barriers in terms of accessing funding. Too many disparate funding sources with narrow criteria, which holistic projects tend not to fit	2
	Availability of funding for more sustainable projects	• Funding pots for social/environmental projects are too small • Funders are risk averse, giving little support for innovative sustainable projects	5
	Lack of revenue funding	• Revenue funding rarely available	3
Sub-total			14
Understanding/knowledge/skills and support for sustainable regeneration	Understanding and supporting the concept, and practical implications, of sustainable development and sustainable regeneration	• Lack of professionals' understanding of what sustainable regeneration is • Need better understanding of sustainable development and what it means in practice • Wide variety between housing associations in how they view sustainability	9
	The need for skills and expertise	• Practitioners need to be able to cross professional boundaries to achieve sustainable regeneration and this should be part of courses in higher and further education	5
Sub-total			14
Dealing with long-term nature of gains in sustainable developments		• Private developers of sustainable regeneration projects provide long-term external benefits (such as energy cost savings) that accrue to individuals and society. Should developers pay for these benefits? • Developers and contractors are not responsible for longer-term management of buildings, therefore life cycle costs are not considered	5
Achieving long-term continuation of projects		• Hard to ensure economic sustainability of schemes such as community recycling • Absence of long-term strategic relationships between key stakeholders	5
Total			89

61. There were six main areas of concern raised through the interviews, case studies and workshop.

Policy issues related to achieving a joined-up, long-term approach

62. Organisational problems relating to how sustainable development and regeneration is integrated and delivered throughout government. For example, 'The government's sustainable development strategy is not yet embedded in departments like DTI or organisations like RDAs'.

'There is a lack of integration between sectors because policy developers are only interested in their area of work, which creates silos.' At a local level, there is concern at the range of initiatives, how they link up, and the role that each organisation is supposed to play. 'There is a lot of policy and guidance at the central government level, and a lot of good practice at the local level, but there is a gap in guidance and implementation of sustainable regeneration at the regional and sub-regional level.'

63. Joining up in policy. For example, the need for policy makers to make more and clearer links between different areas of policy, such as forestry and regeneration. Local government processes need to be integrated and simplified. **‘Currently it is difficult to align regeneration projects with community plans, sub-regional plans and neighbourhood renewal strategies etc.’**

64. Short-term political cycles and expectations. For example, the issues of short-term initiatives, of commitment problems caused by the political cycles of 3-5 years, and of the pressure to produce quick results all impacted on the perception of governments (both national and local) as unwilling or unable to commit themselves to long-term, sustainable regeneration.

The problem of achieving a balance between environmental, social and economic goals

65. These points dealt with the issue of achieving a balance between the environmental, social and economic in sustainable regeneration practice, and highlighted the fact that this balance is often not achieved. For example local authorities are under pressure to deliver on main spending services (education and social services) therefore resources are shifted to meet these targets leaving little scope for looking at the bigger picture of sustainable development. The balance can be upset in a number of ways, including:

- Economic goals can often overshadow social and environmental elements. One interviewee reported that **‘The need for jobs in the North West means that other aspects of sustainable development are overlooked’**. **‘There is tension between the economic strategy of the East of England concentrating on GDP, and people who are concerned with the strategy’s potential impacts on the environment and society.’** There is of course pressure on the construction industry to reduce costs. Some respondents argued that the reforms urged on the industry by the Egan Report¹¹ may well be in conflict with the need for sustainable construction. Certainly **‘the debate on cost has overshadowed the debate on sustainability’**.
- The benefits from regeneration can sometimes not be spread evenly if social, economic and environmental goals are not given equal weight. For example, communities, or certain sectors of the community, can fail to benefit from otherwise successful regeneration when gentrification occurs and housing becomes too expensive for the original residents. There is equally a problem where environmental improvements are the main objective: **‘Despite significant environmental**

improvements in mining areas, social problems are less successfully addressed e.g. unemployment, health, crime.’

‘Projects successful in achieving environmental sustainability have performed less well on social sustainability issues.’ ‘Sustainable regeneration is too technology driven – developers/contractors will look at putting in solar panels but not at the social aspects.’

- Eight points related to the environment getting left out in the balance. For example, architects not placing enough emphasis on energy efficiency, or **‘Yorkshire Forward came up against resistance from DTI over using greenhouse gas emissions as a measure of the region’s success’**.

Resources for joined-up sustainable projects

66. There are never enough resources (manpower and finance). However, the key issues were as much about the nature of the funding (grant or loan), and where it comes from, as the amount. The issues raised included:

- The short-term nature of most funding programmes. This is an inefficient and wasteful way of investing in regeneration. **‘Funding programmes encourage short-termism and can make it difficult to spend money sustainably.’** ‘Community schedules may be slower than funders’ schedules, and if not spent in time funding may be lost.’ ‘Evaluation frameworks (based on output rather than outcome measures) further encourage short-term thinking.’ Short-term funding for community environmental regeneration projects means short-term contracts for staff working for these communities. This results in a lack of momentum and continuity for the community. This also leads to the constant reinvention of the wheel. **‘Funding announcements send people into a flurry as local authorities bid for funds and send strategic planning out the window, thus short-term funding skews long-term planning.’**
- The lack of resources for, and aversion of funders to, innovative joined-up sustainable projects. Sustainable development projects face barriers in terms of accessing funding. There are too many disparate sources of funding with narrow funding criteria, which holistic projects tend not to fit. **‘Funders are often risk averse, giving little support for innovative sustainable projects.’** **‘Funding pots for social/environmental projects are too small – they tend to be pigeon-holed from economic schemes.’**
- The general lack of availability of revenue funding. While funding is available for capital costs, it is harder to get revenue funding for longer-term management and maintenance.

11. Construction Task Force (1998) *Rethinking Construction*, London: The Stationery Office



Case study: Greenwich Peninsula

Until a hundred years ago Greenwich Peninsula was famed only for its wildlife and fisheries. Then the Blackwall Tunnel was driven under the Thames to link it with the north bank and with it came industrial development. In 1985 British Gas closed the last major industrial works on the site. In 1997 English Partnerships purchased the 300 acre brownfield site and began a massive regeneration project. The overarching objective of the scheme was to create a sustainable community on the site combining mixed-use, residential and commercial areas with shopping and recreation facilities.

Since 1997 the industrial wasteland has been transformed, with hundreds of acres remediated and serviced. Hundreds of new homes have already been constructed, along with a school and a health centre and leisure and retail facilities, including Sainsbury's ground breaking energy saving food store. All this has helped create thousands of jobs. The development of the area has focused on minimising its impact on the wider environment. Greenwich Millennium Village has high targets set for reductions in primary and embodied energy consumption and reductions in water demand, CO₂ and construction waste. Grey water recycling schemes have been implemented at the Millennium Dome and Sainsbury's and the landscaped areas include an Ecology Park and ecological terracing scheme along the riverside.

Greenwich Peninsula boasts an impressive integrated public transport system. Improving access between Greenwich and central London was a priority. The Jubilee Line was extended to the Peninsula with a new transport interchange directly above the station. All the facilities in the development are all linked up with parks, pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport, which will reduce the number of cars on the road, and there is a new footbridge linking the area to East Greenwich.

An exciting new future is planned for the Peninsula. An additional 10,000 mixed-tenure homes will be developed on the site. The Dome is to be transformed into an entertainment and sports venue, surrounded by additional leisure, retail and office space, which will generate thousands of jobs in the area.



Case study: Laganside Corporation, Belfast

For generations the River Lagan has played an important role in the historical development of Belfast, providing a rich maritime and industrial heritage. However, over the years little consideration has been given to the environmental impact on the River Lagan, resulting in sluggish muddy waters, smelly mud-banks revealed by low tides and derelict buildings which backed onto the Lagan.

In 1989 Laganside Corporation was created by the Government with the mission of improving the quality of the River Lagan and redeveloping land along its banks. The Lagan weir was completed in 1994 eliminating the adverse effects of the tidal river. A programme of river dredging and aeration improved the water quality and the depth of the river, having positive effects on fish and wildlife. Salmon were reintroduced in 1997, with over 400 returning to spawn. A new wildlife bank has been facilitated and the river is now home to waterfowl and seals. The public investment ploughed into the area to better the environment has catalysed £665 million in private investment in the first 12 years of the project.

Laganside Corporation is now in its twelfth year of regeneration activity, offering office accommodation, refurbished and new build housing to meet the increased demand in the area, and retail and leisure facilities. To ensure the most deprived communities benefit from the regeneration, training and education initiatives have been established, enabling new skills to be gained, creating more employment opportunities. A pathway programme, establishing pedestrian links and cycle routes along the river, has improved accessibility for all. A green corridor has also been created supporting the spread of wildlife habitats and improving the natural environment. The Lagan River's built and natural heritage is now recognised and valued as an area of which local people can be proud.

Understanding, knowledge, support and skills for sustainable development/regeneration

67. Nine of the points we identified related to problems of understanding what sustainable development and regeneration meant, in theory and in practice, and to the issue of support for a more integrated, sustainable, approach. **'There is a lack of understanding of the concept of both sustainable development and sustainable regeneration amongst policy developers.'**

'Regeneration professionals in the public, private, voluntary sectors, along with community members involved in regeneration projects, all need a better understanding of sustainable development and what it means in practice.'

68. Five points related to the need for more skills and expertise. **'The skill of working across professional boundaries should be taught in higher and further education courses for regeneration practitioners.'**

Dealing with the long-term nature of gains in sustainable developments

69. This problem, that was raised five times, relates to the fact that more sustainable approaches often involve investment 'up front', which achieves gains in the long term. The question was raised about how the costs should be spread in relation to who is gaining in the long term (e.g. between developers and users). Other points related to **'the need to factor in life-cycle costs in a more sustainable approach, and the need to better understand and use life-time costing methods'**. Financial frameworks do not fully factor in long term costs, benefits and energy costs (embedded and running), and lead to reluctance to make sufficient investment at the project outset. When faced with existing housing stock, **'there is a need to overcome the tradition of bulldozing areas in decline, and to consider fully the costs and benefits of refurbishment as opposed to demolition'**.

Achieving long-term continuation of sustainable regeneration schemes

70. The final five points in this section related to problems with keeping sustainable regeneration projects going in the long term. There are difficulties in achieving economic self-sufficiency for sustainable regeneration projects. This is a major barrier in some areas of the UK **'where 'grant dependency' exists and enterprise and community leadership have not developed'**. Regeneration agents are required **'to produce exit strategies and are not encouraged to consider the longer-term management of programmes to sustain momentum'**. **'It is also hard to ensure the economic sustainability of schemes such as community recycling.'** Another problem raised was **'the absence of long-term strategic relationships between key stakeholders'**.

Success factors

71. When asked for the success factors in bringing together environmental, social and economic outcomes, we were told that the projects had, for example:

- Established broad based and robust partnerships that engaged a wide range of stakeholders, and which had a shared vision and deliverable objectives
- Taken an holistic and long term view to assessment. They applied more integrated and evidence-based forms of measurement to evaluation processes e.g. quality of life indicators, social and environmental audits and sustainability/health impact assessments
- Recognised all of the social and environmental costs and benefits of decisions, e.g. in considering the relative costs of demolition versus renewal and refurbishment
- Taken a lifetime view of costings and made short-term investments for long-term gain
- Used design solutions that encouraged sustainable lifestyles, e.g. compact/high-density mixed-use neighbourhoods, close to goods and services; with good links to sustainable transport, waste recycling facilities and access to low or zero carbon emission energy.

Conclusions

72. In this section we set out the conclusions we have drawn from our investigation.

Moving from concepts into practice

73. The concept of sustainable regeneration – ensuring social, economic and environmental outcomes – is recognised and accepted by a large number of individuals and projects. The environment is mainly considered as ‘physical’ – traditionally the built environment and the public realm. Many regard environmental benefits as a ‘by-product’, the primary objectives of regeneration being social and economic. For example, the aim of many housing projects is to provide affordable warm homes and improve the health of residents – not to make a contribution to the UK carbon emissions reduction targets.

74. The concept of environmental justice is not well understood, and few projects use the term to describe their activity. We have not found any project that was established under any of the governments’ regeneration programmes to tackle the issue of pollution or other environmental hazard that emanated from outside the neighbourhood. Nor have we come across any examples of planning that were sufficiently long-term to address the impacts of climate change – e.g. building ‘climate headroom’ into urban design and building design.

75. There remains, therefore, an issue about how far sustainable development is understood, what it means in practice, regarding costs and benefits. There is a need to ensure a greater sharing of information, for example by using the new Regional Centres of Excellence for Urban Regeneration.

76. Many practitioners and policy makers connected with regeneration in the UK believe that a sustainable development approach can achieve added value to regeneration. They identified a wide range of examples that illustrate how a sustainable regeneration approach can achieve linked economic, social and environmental benefits. A resource efficient approach not only saves resources and lessens negative environmental impacts; it can raise the profile of an area, improve health for

local people, provide marketing opportunities, create new employment, save money for individuals, the community and developers, and achieve long-term savings in terms of ongoing investment. The added value benefits can accrue to individuals, communities, developers, practitioners and the public purse.

77. Our three criteria for sustainable regeneration fit with the opinions and experience of practitioners and policy makers in the regeneration field in the UK. Sustainable regeneration is a natural progression in the development of regeneration practice here. Historically, regeneration in the UK has moved from an approach that concentrated on the physical environment and large-scale economic solutions, to a point where the need for a targeted approach to social needs was also recognised as important. Sustainable regeneration takes this development to the next stage, by:

- Recognising that neighbourhood problems have complex, linked, environmental, social and economic causes and require integrated social, economic and environmental solutions
- Highlighting the fact that we want regeneration interventions to last in the long term and lead to self-sustaining neighbourhoods that work over time
- Reinforcing the centrality of local people and communities to the success of regeneration
- Recognising the impacts and implications of regeneration activity for resource use and the natural environment, and the fact that all of our activities need to contribute to reduced resource use and an improved natural environment.

78. The 46 case studies demonstrate that there are a large number of projects across the UK successfully bringing together mutually reinforcing social, economic and environmental benefits to local communities. **Many local communities and organisations are becoming more sustainable, but they often act in isolation from one another – sometimes reinventing the same approach. Their efforts have not yet reached the point where sustainable regeneration could be described as ‘mainstream’. To do this they need a stronger lead from government at both national and local level.**

Sustainable development and regeneration policy

79. We are in no doubt that sustainable regeneration is part of the language of government. For instance:

‘In the late 20th century the big political challenge – and the greatest success I believe – for democrats on the left of centre was to develop combined objectives of economic prosperity and social justice. I believe **the biggest challenge for the early 21st century is to combine economic progress with social and environmental justice.**’¹²

‘A wider vision of strong and sustainable communities is needed to underpin this plan, flowing from the Government’s strong commitment to sustainable development. **The way our communities develop, economically, socially and environmentally, must respect the needs of future generations as well as succeeding now.** This is the key to lasting, rather than temporary, solutions; to creating communities that can stand on their own feet and adapt to the changing demands of modern life. Places where people want to live and will continue to want to live.’¹³

‘The most deprived areas suffer from a combination of physical, economic and social problems. We are convinced that **regeneration will only be successful and sustainable if programmes seek to address the array of challenges, striking a balance between ‘people’ and ‘place’ based regeneration and recognising that neither can succeed without the other.**’¹⁴

80. However, the wider environment does not explicitly appear as an objective in regeneration programmes in any part of the UK. For example, none set ‘reduction of carbon emissions’ as an objective, despite the Government’s climate change targets. Most measure social and economic outcomes, but not environmental ones. This is partly the result of different departments having responsibilities for economic, social, and environmental outcomes. However, over the last 20 years, the realisation that social outcomes depend on economic performance (particularly the creation of jobs and skill development) has meant that regeneration programmes have been able to combine social and economic objectives. Local health and education departments are in the process of being brought into regeneration programmes. The precedent of ‘joined-up government’ in regeneration is therefore already established; mainstreaming the involvement of environmental departments and agencies should be the next step.

81. Most government agencies involved with regeneration are required to produce a sustainable development strategy. We are concerned at the varying levels of commitment and priority given to sustainable development by these agencies – often as a result of the varying levels of commitment by their sponsoring departments, for example, the Department of Trade and Industry in relation to Regional Development Agencies.

82. National housing agencies – such as the Housing Corporation and Communities Scotland – are encouraging and supporting sustainable housing design. For example, Communities Scotland’s predecessor, Scottish Homes, along with Scottish Natural Heritage, published a guide to sustainable housing,¹⁵ but the drive for sustainable development has not been translated into strategic objectives for the Social Inclusion Partnerships in Scotland that are now the responsibility of Communities Scotland. Neither Scottish Natural Heritage nor the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency is involved with the Partnerships. Even in funding housing, the targets set for Communities Scotland relate to numbers of units rather than any link to the sustainable development cross-cutting theme of the Scottish Executive’s Partnership Agreement.¹⁶

83. There are however signs of hope. The most significant development has been in England, with the involvement of CABI (the SDC for Architecture and the Built Environment), the Environment Agency, the SDC for Integrated Transport, English Heritage and the Sustainable Development Commission in the nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas.¹⁷ In Scotland, the Cities Review assessed the sustainability of the cities, including undertaking an environmental footprint assessment.¹⁸

84. The Deputy Prime Minister has made sustainable development a theme within the Sustainable Communities Plan. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in England is producing a good practice guide to address environmental exclusion, and we hope that this will include the development of floor targets on environmental exclusion. Governments are giving high priority to ‘liveability’: improving neighbourhood environments, creating cleaner, greener, better maintained streets and public spaces.¹⁹

12. Jack McConnell, First Minister for Scotland, 18 February 2002

13. ODPM (2003) *Sustainable Communities Plan*, London: The Stationery Office

14. House of Commons; ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee, (2003) *The Effectiveness of Government Regeneration Initiatives* Seventh Report of Session 2002-03, London: The Stationery Office

15. Stevenson, F and Williams, N (2000) *Sustainable Housing Design Guide for Scotland*, London: The Stationery Office

16. Scottish Executive (2003) *A partnership for a better Scotland*, London: The Stationery Office

17. CABI et al, (2003) *Building Sustainable Communities: Actions for Housing Market Renewal*, London: CABI

18. Scottish Executive (2002) *Review of Scotland’s Cities – the Analysis*, London: The Stationery Office

19. For example, ODPM (2003) *Sustainable Communities Plan*, London: The Stationery Office

Buildings and construction

85. Buildings use 50% of our energy and 50% of landfill waste comes from the construction industry; 20% of toxic waste comes from construction and demolition. This level of environmental damage cannot continue. If we are to achieve a 60% cut in carbon emissions by 2050, we need to ensure that buildings constructed today, which should be around in 50 years' time, meet this standard of energy efficiency.²⁰ This is a major opportunity to embed sustainable development principles into regeneration programmes.

86. Sustainable housing projects tend to be one-off examples of good practice, despite the wide availability of information on sustainable designs and techniques. The lack of economies of scale for equipment and materials increases costs, and many materials have to be imported. Stronger building regulations can remedy this situation by boosting activity and increasing demand. In the interim, some local authorities are taking the initiative by adopting a proactive approach, and attempting to overcome the shortcomings and barriers of existing building and planning control through the use of checklists and guides for sustainable construction, sustainable buildings policies or supplementary planning guidance. These approaches either encourage or require planning applications to be submitted with a statement which demonstrates that sustainable design and construction considerations have been addressed.

87. This action is welcome, but **it is important to strengthen national policy and regulations in order to maintain a 'level playing field'**. Whereas developers may tolerate these requirements in high demand areas, in other parts of the country these could be avoided by simply choosing to develop elsewhere.

88. Cost is a key deterrent factor for private developers; however the perception of cost is often greater than the reality. **We need to consider a different costing framework – one based on long-term costs and benefits (including embodied energy and running costs), which will help overcome any reluctance to making sufficient investment at the outset of the project. And we need to consider whether tax incentives should favour the refurbishment and upgrading of existing homes and 'green' materials.**

89. Better communication could help to create demand for sustainable housing and counter the risk-averse practices of developers. Developers are concerned that sustainable housing is a minority demand, which may already be exhausted. A 'Catch 22' situation currently exists where developers' need for certainty (and profit levels) means that they will only provide types of property that are known to have sold before. Developers believe they are responding to demand, but house buyers are merely responding to supply. Information and guidance on the benefits of sustainable housing, distributed through mortgage advisors at banks and building societies, could help to break this negative cycle. We need clients – both landlords and individuals – who demand sustainable housing to change the industry.

90. There is a need to overcome the tradition of bulldozing areas in decline, and to consider fully the costs and benefits of refurbishment rather than demolition. The environmental costs of demolition are huge compared with the environmental benefits of full conversion of existing homes to 'excellent' EcoHomes²¹ standards. The energy invested and embodied in the existing stock is extremely high. Demolition largely wastes these and uses more energy. New buildings require very large amounts of embodied energy.

91. The social impacts of demolition in terms of 'unravelling' communities also need to be considered. The re-housing and dispersal implications of 'large scale clearance' are huge. This is likely to have a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic communities living in older properties. Re-housing people creates problems of displaced families, and spreads rather than contains low demand. And site sensitive regeneration reuses historic infrastructure and claims the 'heritage dividend'.

20. Figures from the Energy Savings Trust and the DTI (2003) *Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy*, London: The Stationery Office

21. Eco Homes is the environmental rating of homes programme developed by Building Research Establishment Ltd, and sponsored by the National House-building Council.

Recommendations:

10 action points to mainstream sustainable regeneration

92. What must be done to move exhortation into policy and practice, and to move beyond a series of local projects to mainstream sustainable regeneration? On the basis of this investigation, we could provide a long and detailed list of recommendations for both policy makers and practitioners. However, as an independent government advisor, our main message is to government, both UK and devolved. We have found many practitioners who successfully bring mutually reinforcing social, economic and environmental benefits to local communities, and who are looking to government for a stronger lead.

93. The Sustainable Development Commission has 10 key action points for government to help to mainstream sustainable regeneration in practice.

94. The Sustainable Development Commission calls upon the Deputy Prime Minister, other Whitehall Ministers and Ministers in the Devolved Administrations to review their regeneration strategies in the light of these recommendations, and to agree and publish action plans by July 2004.

95. The Sustainable Development Commission also calls upon the Audit Commission, the Auditor General for Wales, Audit Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Audit Office to further their interest in regeneration, housing, community wellbeing and sustainable development by reflecting these conclusions and recommendations in their work.



Sustainable development principles should be at the heart of regeneration policy and practice, thus ensuring that regeneration has environmental as well as economic and social justice outcomes.



Local people should continue to be at the heart of the process. Effective community involvement and development is essential for successful regeneration. This is just as true for sustainable regeneration. Sustainable regeneration helps highlight the need for good community involvement and development, including local businesses and voluntary organisations. The next generation of community leaders should be fostered through training programmes and in schools.



Training strategies for economic development, regeneration and planning should address the lack of understanding of sustainable development, and the shortage of skills needed to deliver sustainable regeneration. Government should ensure that the Regional Centres of Excellence for Urban Regeneration prioritise sustainable development in all of their capacity-building work with professionals, councillors and community leaders.



Improving the quality of the local environment whilst minimising negative impacts of resource use should be part of the strategic aims of every regeneration programme and partnership. Government should require neighbourhood regeneration programmes to undertake a review of the local environment including the impact of external pollution and other issues of environmental justice.



Government's own environment and resource priorities and targets should be integrated into neighbourhood regeneration programmes, particularly:

- Climate change and carbon emissions reduction
- Waste management
- Sustainable transport networks
- Water supply and flood management issues
- Green space strategies
- Sustainable construction.



An integrated and long-term approach should be built in to regeneration programmes from the start, including the involvement of environmental agencies in partnerships, environmental assessment and whole life costings. Within government, cross-departmental targets should be set and regularly reviewed jointly as part of the development of plans and policies.



Housing and construction should be regarded as major opportunities to embed sustainable development in regeneration and in particular to make a significant contribution to carbon emission reduction. There should be regular reviews of building regulations and construction processes to ensure that both social rented and private developers are required to incorporate full energy efficiency measures, use sustainable energy, reduce waste and pollution, include low toxin materials and promote the responsible use of natural resources.



The planning system should contribute through insistence on higher densities in urban areas, on full environmental assessments before demolition programmes are undertaken, and on integrating public transport into development plans. Planners need to be more proactive in promoting sustainable development.



Employment programmes that are part of regeneration initiatives should support new training programmes in local environmental management, (including recycling, energy conservation and renewables). Neighbourhood management vehicles should be created with a focus on maintenance, security, local services, community links – all of which create front-line jobs.



Existing good practice should be built upon and exchanged, both at a government (e.g. Housing Corporation/Communities Scotland) level and at a neighbourhood level. Good practice in sustainable regeneration should be rewarded and given higher profile, for example through Deputy Prime Minister's Awards for sustainable communities.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Organisations interviewed

Sector	Type of organisation	Main area of operation			Totals
		National/Devolved	English Regional	Local	
Public	Government Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Environment, Northern Ireland • Department of Social Development, Northern Ireland • Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 			3
	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development Foundation • Countryside Agency • English Nature • English Partnerships • Environment Agency • Forestry Commission • Housing Corporation • Communities Scotland • Scottish Enterprise • Scottish Environment Protection Agency • Scottish Natural Heritage • Welsh Development Agency 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laganside Corporation, Belfast • Housing Action Trust, Castle Vale 	14
	Government Office, GO (England)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GO for the East of England • GO for the South-West of England 		2
	Regional Development Agency (England)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yorkshire Forward • North-West Development Agency 		2
	Local authority			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luton Borough Council • Leicester City Council • Swale Borough Council • Swansea County Council • Wrexham Borough County Council • Birmingham City Council • East Riding of Yorkshire Council • Stirling Council 	8

Appendix 1: (continued)

Sector	Type of organisation	Main area of operation			Totals
		National/Devolved	English Regional	Local	
Voluntary	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of the Earth • Friends of the Earth Scotland • Community Regeneration Trust • WWF Scotland • Coalfields Regeneration Trust • Community Foundation Northern Ireland • Urban and Economic Development Group Ltd • INTEGER (Intelligent and Green) • National Trust • Improvement and Development Agency • Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations • Forward Scotland • Groundwork UK • Groundwork Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Wildlife Trust • Kings Fund • Future West • East End Quality of Life Initiative • Peabody Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyfi Eco Valley Partnership • Hockerton Housing Project • Sherwood Energy Village 	22
	Professional body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Institute of Town Planning • Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors • Construction Federation • Local Government Association • Northern Ireland Local Government Association 			5
Private	Architectural consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaia Architect Group • Levitt Bernstein Associates • HTA Architects 			3
Research	Research/academic body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Construction Industry Research and Information Association • Building Research Establishment • Urban Renewal Foundation • Conservation and Development in Sparsely Populated Areas • Beyond Green • The School of Tropical Hygiene and Tropical Medicines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre for Regional Economic Development 		7

Appendix 2: **Case studies**

• Arts Factory, Rhondda
• Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership, Falmouth, Cornwall
• Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED), Sutton, Surrey
• Black Country Urban Forest, Wolverhampton
• Callanbridge Residents Association, Armagh
• Castle Vale Housing Action Trust, Birmingham
• Cavell Way Home Zone, Sittingbourne, Kent
• Community Environment Programme, East Manchester
• Community Regeneration Trust North East
• Dyfi Eco-Valley Partnership, Powys
• Easdale Island Trust, Easdale Island, Argyll
• East End Quality of Life Initiative, Sheffield
• Energy in the Community, Thurnscoe, nr Barnsley
• Environment Trust, London
• Fairfield Housing Co-operative, Perth
• Ffaldau Project, Blaenllechau
• Gallions Ecopark, Thamesmead, London
• Grahame Park, London
• Grainger Town Partnership, Newcastle
• Green Building Macintosh Village, Manchester
• Greenwich Peninsula, London
• Hartcliffe Health & Environment Group, Bristol
• Harlow Park Green Housing Development, Liverpool
• Heeley City Farm, Sheffield
• Hockerton Housing Project, Nottinghamshire
• INTEGER Westminster Towers Programme, London
• Laganside, Belfast
• Leicester City Council (implementation of EMAS)
• Link Housing Association, Fife
• Longford River Project, London
• Markham Willows, Derbyshire
• Manor and Castle Development Trust, Sheffield
• Northmoor Urban Arts Project, Manchester
• Premier Business Parks, Walsall
• Poundbury Estate, Dorset
• Royds Community Association, Bradford
• St George Development, London
• Sherwood Energy Village, Nottinghamshire
• Shoreditch – New Deal, London
• Southmead & Trymside Environment Project, Bristol
• Swansea Poverty Action Network, Swansea
• Taff Bargoed Community Park, Merthyr Tydfil
• Thames Chase Community Forest, London
• Upton Urban Extension, Northamptonshire
• Vines Centre Trust, Kent
• Walworth Garden Farm, London

Appendix 3: 'Sustainable regeneration – building better solutions' workshop participants

Arts Factory
Audit Commission
Building Research Establishment
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
Communities Directorate Wales
Conservation & Development in Sparsely Populated Areas
Construction Best Practice
Department of Trade and Industry
East Lancashire Sustainability Framework Group
Enabling Concepts
Environment Agency
Environment Trust
Environmental regeneration consultant
Forward Scotland
Gaia Architects
Government Office for the South-East of England
Groundwork Manchester
Hartcliffe Health and Environmental Action Group
INTEGER
London Development Agency
London School of Economics
Manor and Castle Development Trust
National Tenants Resource Centre
National Urban Forestry Unit
Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Newcastle City Council
Peabody Trust
RegenSchool
Regional Co-ordination Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Town Planning Institute
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
Socialist Environmental Resources Association Scotland
Welsh Development Agency
Wildlife Conservation and Flood Management Team, Defra
Yorkshire Forward

Commissioners

Jonathon Porritt (Chairman) Director of Forum for the Future;
Rod Aspinwall Deputy Chairman of the Enviro Group and Professor of Environmental Management at Cardiff University;
Councillor Maureen Child Lead Member for Sustainability and Finance, Edinburgh City Council; **Rita Clifton** Chairman of Interbrand;
Lindsey Colbourne Co-ordinator of InterAct; **Anna Coote** Director of the Public Health Programme at the King's Fund; **Valerie Ellis** Member of the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee and until recently Assistant General Secretary of Prospect; **Nicky Gavron** Deputy Mayor of London and the Mayor's Advisor on Planning and Spatial Development; **Brian Hanna** President of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health;
Alan Knight Head of Social Responsibility, Kingfisher;
Walter Menzies Chief Executive of the Mersey Basin Campaign;
Tim O'Riordan Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia and Associate Director of the Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment; **Derek Osborn** Chairman of UNED-UK; **Anne Power** Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Deputy Director of the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion; **Richard Wakeford** Chief Executive of the Countryside Agency; **Jess Worth** Campaigner with People and Planet; **Raymond Young** Board member of Forward Scotland.
Maria Adebawale, Ed Crooks, Charles Secrett and **Graham Wynne** stood down from the Commission this year. **Nicky Gavron** is currently on leave of absence. We have been grateful for the contributions they made to the work of the SDC.

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However, the views expressed are those of the Sustainable Development Commission.

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(2002) *A Vision for sustainable regeneration; environment and poverty: the missing link?* London: SDC

(2003) *Healthy futures: sustainable development opportunities for the NHS*, London: SDC

Jackson, T and Michaelis, L, (2003) *Policies for sustainable consumption*, London: SDC

Porritt, J, (2003) *Redefining prosperity: resource productivity, economic growth and sustainable development*, London: SDC

SDC (2003) *UK Climate Change Programme: a policy audit*, London: SDC

The SDC were co-signatories of the following report which is available from www.cabe.org.uk

(2003) *Building sustainable communities: actions for housing market renewal*, London: CABE

To know more about the SDC's project which aims to link carbon reduction initiatives across the UK, please see www.dCARB-uk.org



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